

COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

VOL. XXXI. No. 17.] LONDON, SATURDAY, OCT. 26, 1816. [Price 1s. ½d

513]

[514]

TO THE

REFORMERS IN GENERAL, AND PARTICULARLY TO THOSE, WHO HAVE COME FORWARD, AND ARE COMING FOR- WARD, AT PUBLIC MEETINGS.

*A Reply to the falsehoods and calumnies
of that part of the press which is in the
pay of Corruption.*

Botley, 23rd October, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

The noble efforts which you have made, and are making, have, as we might reasonably expect, stirred the stomach of Corruption to the very bottom, and she is now, through her well-known channel, through that press which has served her as a mouth-piece for so many years, vomiting forth the very bitterest and foulest portions of her gall. She does it, however, in an agony. The sweat of terror pours down her face. Like Macbeth, she would pray to be saved; but "Amen sticks in her throat;" and, if she has no

other power, she seems resolved to lie and to curse to the last.

There seems now to be very little ground to fear that the corrupt part of the press will succeed in deluding the people from their object. The causes of the nation's distress are so well known, and the effects are so severe, that *delusion* may be set at defiance. But, it is due to those who have done themselves great honour in taking the lead at public meetings, that they should be defended against the falsehoods and the calumnies of Corruption.

At the Meeting in Southwark, Surrey, Mr. CALVERT, one of the Members, took a distinguished part, and, for having done this, Mr. CALVERT, who is a *brewer*, has been charged by the COURIER and other vile prints of having voted against the *Property Tax*, which, it is said, was a charge solely upon the rich, while he, as a brewer, has no scruple to add ten per cent. to the price of his beer, which ten per cent. he coolly puts into his own pocket.

This is one of the foulest of all the tricks of Corruption, and, therefore, I

R

think it right fully to expose it. Corruption keeps out of sight, that the price of Barley has recently been greatly augmented, and the price of Hops augmented *three-fold*. But, Corruption keeps out of sight something much more material in the present case; namely, *the taxes*, which are paid upon Mr. Calvert's beer before it reaches the lips of those who drink it. He used to pay 4*s.* 4*d.* a bushel tax upon his *malt*; he now pays 2*s.* 4*d.* while the *barley* is about 6*s.* a bushel. So that here, to start with, the government receives *nearly half as much as the farmer*. Next Mr. Calvert pays a heavy *tax on his hops*. What is the precise amount I do not know. Next he has to pay another *tax upon the beer itself* after it be brewed. He has to pay a tax on his coals, his horses, his harness, and on the iron-hoops that surround his casks. On the malt of a barrel of beer, he pays about 9*s.* 10*d.* on the beer itself 9*s.* on the hops about 2*s.* perhaps. So that here are 20*s.* 10*d.* at once, which the government receive on every 36 gallons of porter, which (if not a drop of waste take place) *retail* at 60*s.* And out of the 39*s.* 2*d.* comes the tax on coals, on harness, on iron, on all other things used by the brewer; then comes the tax for publican's licence; the tax on his windows,

his candles, his soap and every thing that *he* uses also. So that, the wonder is, that porter can be brewed and retailed at 5*d.* per pot. Take off all the taxes, which are imposed upon the malt, the hops, the beer, the coals, the harness, the sign-post, and, in other shapes, upon the things necessary for brewing and selling the beer, and then Mr. CALVERT's porter will be sold retail for, perhaps, *three halfpence a pot*, and leave him a much greater profit than he now derives from his business. It appears wonderful to me, that the brewers, and other persons, who deal in the necessaries of life, do not take the pains to expose these abominable falsehoods, put forth by the corrupt press. I am astonished that they do not come forth and meet Corruption face to face; or rather, that they do not come forth and tear off her mask, and expose her, in all her deformity to the execration of the people. I shall be obliged to some one, to *some brewer*, to give me an exact account of all the taxes, with which his barrel of porter goes forth loaded, and also of the amount of the license tax and other taxes, to which the publican is subject. I wish also to know the *wholesale price* of a barrel of porter. The labouring man finds his wages lowered, he hears that the price of barley is lowered, and



he naturally is disappointed that the price of his pot of porter is not lowered. But, if he clearly saw how large a portion of the price of his pot of porter, or of ale, was actually received by the government, his wonder would be, not that his drink cost him so much, but, that it cost him so little. The coals which make the fire that warms him in the public house, are taxed; the glass out of which he drinks is taxed; the window that lights him while he is drinking by day and the candle which lights him while he is drinking by night are taxed; the waiter that brings him the beer is taxed; the land upon which the hops and barley grow is taxed; the Farmer's horses, his harness, his implements, his windows, his house, and all that he uses in order to get the barley are taxed; and before the pot of porter reaches his lips, almost the whole of it is tax. These are the sort of representations which ought to be made to the people, in order that they may see the real cause of the high price of their drink. In the article of *salt*, so necessary to the health of the people and to the preservation of their food, almost the whole is tax. Twenty shillings a bushel is the price of salt, and if there were no tax upon that article the price would be less than *two* shillings a bushel near the sea coast, and not more than *three* shillings a bushel in London. It would be very hard to accuse the salt maker of extortion. It is not he who pockets the twenty shillings. It is the

government which receives the far greater part of it. It always gives me great pain, when I hear of the people, goaded by their hunger, flying upon the shops of *bakers*, or of any other dealers in the necessaries of life. How very few men in those trades ever become rich! The poor man, when he sees the price of the loaf so much higher than the price of the quantity of flour contained in the loaf, breaks out into a rage against the baker. The poor man forgets what enormous taxes the baker has to pay. Tax for his horse, tax for his cart, or for the materials of which the cart is composed; tax on his windows, house, candles, coals, soap, salt, shoes, tea, sugar, beer, and in short upon every thing that he eats, drinks, wears, or uses in any way whatever; and in what other way is he to obtain the means of paying all these taxes, and to provide food and raiment for himself into the bargain except by means of the profit, or additional price, which he charges upon the flour made into bread? The Magistrates at Guildford, at a riot there the other day, are said to have quieted the people, by telling them, that they themselves would give encouragement to other bakers, who would sell their bread cheaper. Much praise is due to these gentlemen for having exerted their authority, and restored peace in their town, without the calling in of *Troops*; but, they should have explained to the people, that the fault was not the baker's; that every baker, will, for

his own interest, sell as cheap as he can; that, if one baker should happen to sell dearer than others, his shop will be deserted, till he lowers his price, because any man, who chuses to make and sell bread, may do it if he will.

But, that which ought to put all the friends of freedom upon their guard on this score, is, this well known fact, that the news-papers which are notoriously devoted to corruption, are continually endeavouring to rouse and to direct the rage of the people against bakers, brewers, and butchers. These corrupt men know very well what *is the real cause* of the people's sufferings; but their object is, first, to turn their eyes away from that real cause, and next, to stir them up to acts of violence against tradesmen, who are fellow-sufferers with themselves; because by so stirring them up, an excuse is afforded for quelling them by force of arms. Let the people always bear this in mind, that nothing pleases Corruption so much as to see Troops called forth for the purpose of protecting innocent Farmers and Tradesmen against misguided violence; and that nothing is so sorrowful a sight to the friends of freedom. I am, for my part, so deeply impressed with the magnitude of this evil, that I propose to address, in my next Register, *a Letter to the Labourers and Journey-men of this Kingdom*, calculated to lay before them a perfect knowledge of the real causes of their sufferings;

tending to unite them in the cause of their country, and to preserve the tranquillity and to restore the happiness of that country. That this intended letter may have as wide a circulation as possible, it is my intention to cause it to be published afterwards on a single open sheet of paper, and to cause it to be sold at a very low price; and I hereby beforehand express my hope, that gentlemen in different parts of the country, will cause the said letter to be reprinted and distributed widely. I take this opportunity of observing, that, in consequence of applications for leave to republish the two last Registers, I have no objection to the republishing of them, or of any thing else that I have written or shall write, provided that the republishers, publish, at one and the same time, the *whole* of any article, or letter, that they may think worth republishing, and that they retain both *date and the name*. What I have an objection to is, first, the *garbling* of what I write; and the next is to the being robbed of my fair title to whatever degree of merit shall be thought to belong to my productions. With these two conditions, which no one can say are unreasonable, any of my countrymen are perfectly free to make whatever use they please of any thing that I write and publish, but, unless these conditions be observed, I shall always look upon myself as foully treated by any person who shall republish from my Register.

There are some precautions to be observed in these republications, which it appears to me necessary to notice here. Since the beginning of the war against the people of France, a whole parcel of laws have been passed, laying restrictions upon the press. The presses are all now *Registered*, and no man can use a press, or make types, or presses, without a *license*, and without his name being *Registered*. Every printer is obliged to keep a copy of every thing that he prints, and to produce it if called upon to the Secretary of State, and to write upon it the name of the person who has employed him to print it. The proprietors, Publishers, and printers of Newspapers are compelled to go to the Stamp office and *make oath*, that they are such, and that they live at such and such places; and if any one of them be *changed*, or if either of them should change his place of abode, they must all go and make oath again, in order that this new circumstance may be put into the hands of the government. Every printer is compelled to print his name and place of abode upon every thing that he prints. But lest a cheap publication should get forth, no publication, *not having a stamp upon it*, is allowed to go *postage free*. Nor is this all; for no *pamphlet*, containing less than a sheet and a half, is allowed to be sold, *unless the paper be stamped*. These regulations, and the penalties which are attached to any breach of them, operate

to an almost total exclusion of the common people from any considerable portion of useful knowledge through the means of the press, about the *freedom* of which our unprincipled hirelings have still the audacity to boast, though if our forefathers could hear of the state of slavery to which it is reduced, the hearing of it would make them turn in their graves. Still, however, there is one way which these Argus-eyed laws have left us to circulate our observations in a cheap form without exposing ourselves to penalties, other than those which the Attorney General and a special jury may think proper to inflict. *Open sheets*; that is to say, a sheet of paper, *not folded up*, nor printed with an intention to be folded up, requires no stamp, and may be circulated and sold without any. The whole of one of my Registers might be printed, in rather close print, upon the two sides of one sheet of foolscap paper; and if two or three thousand, or only one thousand, copies were printed, at one press, the expense would not amount to more than about *two-pence half-penny* for each of them, as, in such a case, the printer would content himself to work at as low a price as possible. Thus I shall do the thing myself; and Mr. Clement, the publisher of the Register, will, upon the money being sent to him, from any Gentleman in the Country, forward to such Gentleman any number that he may want. A hundred, at *two-pence half-*

penny each, would amount to a pound. Perhaps I shall be able to get it done for much less; but the particulars shall be stated in the next Register. At any rate, printers, or any other persons *in the country*, are at full liberty to republish any writings of mine at any price, or in any manner, that they please, provided only that they adhere to the *two conditions*, above stated, and if they do not adhere to those conditions, I shall always think that they treat me foully.

Since I am upon the subject of the press, I beg to point out to you, Gentlemen, a circumstance, which is very well worthy of your attention, and which you should not fail to point out to the people at public meetings. The hirelings of Corruption charge you with taking *unfair advantages* of her. Oh! she is very careful never to take unfair advantages! Her hirelings never cry out *Jacobin* and *Leveller*. They never set the people on upon brewers, bakers, and butchers! They never calumniate those whose arguments they are unable to answer! But, at any rate, upon the present occasion, the Society, whose schemes *Lord Cochrane* blew into air, are taking an advantage, which his Lordship has not, and which advantage ought by no means to escape your notice. I have before stated, that no publications are permitted to pass through the Post Office, postage free, except they be stamped, which doubles or trebles the price of them, and you well know, that the Post Office is the only channel, through which any papers can be sent all over the country with regularity and speed. You also know,

that the rate of postage has been going on augmenting by degrees, till at last it has become a very heavy charge. Indeed the taxes raised in this way, amount to half as much as ought to be raised in the whole for carrying on the government of this country. Now, observe, that the *London Tavern Society* advertise in the public Newspapers, that all communications to them are to be sent *under cover* to *Mr. Freeling, the Secretary of the General Post Office*; and, observe again, that all letters addressed to him are *free of postage*. Upon what authority, I should be glad to know, are this Society thus relieved from their share of the *tax on letters*? It is impossible that Mr. Freeling should, of his own head, take upon himself thus to make his office an instrument in the hands of these designing persons. Whence, then, comes that authority, under which he acts as the agent, in exempting this Society from their share of the Post Office tax? The people will be at no loss to answer this question; but I beg you to observe, how *sincere* this nest of charitable persons must be, when, at the very time that they are subscribing their few pounds, in order to make the people believe that they feel for their distress, they are thus withholding a portion of those taxes, which, if they paid it, would assist in paying the debt of the government. Why have not any of you as much right to free postage as this Society has? This, however, is only one instance out of hundreds of the unfair advantage, which the enemies of the liberties of the Country possess. The several Post Offices throughout the kingdom, are so many agents of the government for po-

litical purposes, as is clearly evinced by orders which the Post Masters receive, to transmit to the General Post Office information on such matters, which is coming 'as near as possible to that system of watching, which existed in France, in former times, under the detestable sway of the bloody family of Bourbon, whose cruelties and whose persecutions of every sort, whose insolence and whose brutality has never been equalled even by the Algerines. But, Gentlemen, the watchings of the General Post Office, and of all the endless tribes of taxgatherers are now of no avail. For my part, I would not care if there were a spy stationed at every street corner, and at every crossing of the highway ; nor would I care a straw if to every spy were added a company of soldiers. For, events have brought us into that state, that we stand in need of no secrecy, no plots, no conspiracies, no combinations, no clubs, no correspondences. We need nothing but a fair and open exposition of the *causes* of the nation's ruin ; the effects being written in such legible characters in the purses of men of property, in the distraction in the families of farmers and tradesmen, and upon the emaciated countenances of the labourers and the journeymen. Indeed, how must we laugh, at all the puny efforts to superintend and detect us, who are basely called the *disaffected*, when we see, that the government itself, by the means of its Board of Agriculture, has promulgated to the world the ruined and degraded state of the country ! How must we laugh at Mr. Freeling's circular to his deputies, to give him information, when the information of all our suffer-

ings is conveyed to the government itself by its own creatures ; and when the tide of popular indignation is constantly rolling on in his mail coaches from every quarter and corner of the kingdom !

Bearing these things in mind, Gentlemen, let us now proceed to others of the calumnies of the hirelings of Corruption. The editor of the Courier, in observing upon the proceedings of the Meeting in Southwark, says, that these Meetings cannot have the good of their country in view ; that they wish for a revolution, and for that *political crisis*, which the Nottingham Petition describes as *indispensably necessary*. Gentlemen, this is a sheer falsehood. The Nottingham Petition, so far from describing a political crisis as *indispensably necessary*, earnestly prays the Prince to adopt such measure as shall *effectually prevent such a crisis!*— Thus the adversaries of our freedom and our happiness stick at nothing ; falsehood, though notorious, is always at their command, and never do they hesitate to employ it.

The same writer, upon the same occasion, asserts, that " now, as in 1793, " revolution assumes the garb and shape " of reform, and complaints and petitions " for a reform of Parliament are now " made, as they were then, with a view " to bring the House of Commons into " contempt and odium, and thus prepare " the minds of the mass for another scheme " and system of government, *one and in-* " *divisible.*" Gentlemen, as to attempts to bring the House of Commons into contempt and odium, what have any of

you said more than that the traffick in seats was "*as notorious as the sun at noon day?*" What more need you say? And what is this but repeating the very words of the Members of the House of Commons themselves? The Speaker himself said upon this occasion, that "*our forefathers would have startled with horror*" to hear such an avowal unblushingly made; and, Gentlemen, are we become so very callous that we shall not feel, or such wretched slaves that we shall not express, indignation at that, which would have made our forefathers startle with horror? It is false, however, in these hirelings to assert, that at any meeting in the kingdom *revolutionary* doctrines have been held forth; unless indeed by revolutionary doctrines he meant the doctrines which our forefathers maintained at what is called the "*Glorious Revolution,*" and which revolution, be it remembered, it was that brought the present family to the throne. In no one instance have any of you proposed any *new sort of government*; you have all expressed your wish to retain the present form of government. This form of government, is *King, Lords and Commons.* That is to say, King, Lords, and *People;* for the word *commons*, means the *commonalty*, or the people at large. This does not suit our adversaries. They wish for King and Lords in the first place, and then for a something such as Old Sarum, Gatton, &c. into another House. You have no objection to King or to Lords, but you want, and so do I, a House chosen by all those who pay taxes; because the ancient laws of England say, *that no man shall be taxed without his*

own consent, and because it must be manifest to all mankind, that the man who pays a tax, and who gives no vote for any one of those by whom the tax is imposed, must be taxed without his consent.

But, Gentlemen, this is an old trick of the tools of corruption. A very old and stale trick, to represent those who ask for reform as *wishing for revolution*. Nothing is easier than to *assert* this; but nothing so difficult to *prove*. This writer, I thank him, reminds us of the petitions for reform in the year 1793! He should have shunned that as a sailor shuns the rocks; for in calling our minds back to that period, he only reminds us of the happiness which this country might at this day have enjoyed, in common with the rest of Europe, if the prayer of those petitions had been heard. If reform had then taken place, the family of Bourbon, the Pope, the Inquisition, the Jesuits, all the murderous system of despotism would not have been restored upon the Continent; we should have lived at peace for the last twenty-five years; and we should not now have eleven hundred millions of debt and a standing army of a hundred and fifty thousand men. We should not have exhausted our own means and have rendered ourselves objects of charity with a Bourbon Prince, while we were employing our resources to render our neighbours objects of persecution and the unresisting sufferers of despotic insolence. At the epoch, of which this hireling reminds us, our country was emerging from the distress, into which it had been plunged by a former wicked and wasteful war.

It had nothing to do but to remain at peace with all the world, which would have cleared off its debt, and rendered its taxes so light as to leave in the whole country nothing having the appearance of misery. The *reformers* stood forward to prevent the war against the people of France; and their *reward* was imprisonment, banishment, ruin in many instances, and in some instances death! Gentlemen, justice will never be done to those men; but I trust that justice will yet be done to them as far as possible; and I do not yet despair of seeing the materials of which the monument of Pitt is composed change their shape into a monument to the memory of those men.

You are accused "of sneering at or "openly attacking the *Monarchical principle*, whilst you *calumniate* and *libel* "every *Monarch* in Europe in the most "daring manner." As to the *Monarchical principle*, if you do sneer at it or attack it, you barely do your duty for England, or at least the English constitution knows of no such principle. The word Monarchy means a government in the hands of ONE person; and you may recollect, that the House of Commons themselves prosecuted MR. REEVES for saying that the King was the *trunk*, and that the two Houses were only branches of the tree. So far were they from allowing that this was a government of *one* person. Therefore you are perfectly right in sneering at the Monarchical principle, which is a principle at open war with every idea of our ancestors and with the mind of every man who is not a willing slave. These words, the *Monarch*, the *Sovereign*, his *Majesty's Go-*

vernment, His *Majesty's forces*, His *Majesty's fleet*, His *Majesty's this*, and His *Majesty's that*, are all new in this country. Even the Stuarts used to call England a *Commonwealth*; and, to be sure, the government and the army and the fleet are as much the people's as they are the King's, who, according to our constitution is no more than the Chief of the Nation. There is a talk of making coins, which are to be called *Sovereigns* and *half Sovereigns*, instead of *guineas* and *half guineas*! Verily this is a proper time for such stuff! Just as if we were fools enough to be inspired with *awe* by such ridiculous pomposity! The time is passed for inspiring awe by any such means. We know our own rights and I trust that we are resolved to maintain them; and being so resolved, we have no need to wish to encroach upon the rights of either the King or the Peers. But you calumniate, it seems, "every *Monarch* in Europe." I have read of no calumnies that you have uttered on any of the Monarchs of Europe. You have called them *despots*; and that is no calumny, because calumny includes *falsehood*, and they are despots, as every man is, who governs without the consent and concurrence of the people, and this is what the word *Monarch* means of itself. As to the family of *Bourbon*, of which you have spoken very freely, you have only to open the Books written by all our best writers, the speeches uttered by all our best speakers, for ages past, to find censure, hatred, and abhorrence more strongly expressed, than you have been able to express. The blood of innocent men, shed by that family, would, if collected in a mass, fill an ordinary river for

a week. That family has produced more monsters in human shape than any other family whose names are recorded in history. The Popes have been bloody enough, and so were the Roman Emperors before them ; but there are several single members of the family of Bourbon, each of whom has shed more innocent blood, and that too in the basest manner, and in the cool moments of reflection, than ever was shed by all the bloody popes and Roman Emperors put together. We have one Queen in our history to whose detested name is prefixed the epithet *Bloody*. But, *Mary*, bloody as she really was, did not, during her whole reign, shed so much innocent blood as several of the Bourbons have shed in one single day. Axes, wheels, tortures, flames ; these are the attributes of the Bourbon family. All history teems with accounts of their tyranny ; and, does this impudent tool of corruption think, that you are to be struck dumb for fear of offending this family ? When it is notorious, that we have been brought to beggary, to such a state of villainous beggary, as for the pretended friends of the poor to receive with thanks a boon from the hands of one of this family ; when it is notorious, that we have been reduced to this state of beggary by war against the French people and for the restoration of this same family ; when this is notoriously the case, are you to be restrained from speaking of that family and its deeds in such manner as to you may seem proper ?

These expressions of yours are represented as the mark of a wish on your part to interfere in the internal government of

France. It is said that you wish to render the sovereign hated by his people, and *pave the way if you can for his de-thronement*. This is indeed carrying interpretation to a great length. You will laugh at it ; but, that which you really have done, is this ; you have expressed your wish, that English blood and English treasure should not have been spent in restoring him *against the wishes of the people of France*. You boldly assert, and well you may, that he has been restored against the wishes of the people of France ; else, why is an English army kept up in that country ? If he were able to retain his throne without a foreign force to uphold him, why is that force kept up ? You express your abhorrence at his being kept upon the throne by the arms and by the resources of England. You say, let our troops be withdrawn ; leave the king of France and the people of France to themselves ; it does not become a nation of Bible Societies to uphold a government, under which Protestants are butchered by the thousand. And, because you say *this*, you are accused of a desire to *interfere with the internal government of France* !

However, it is of very little importance to us what is doing in France, except as far as relates to the expending of our money in keeping up an army in that country. It is said, and it is very likely to be true, that one of our hireling newspapers is actually in the regular pay of the Bourbons, and indeed, if we look at the daily contents of those newspapers, which are devoted to the two factions in our country, we must naturally suppose,

that, by amusing us with details about French affairs, they are anxious to divert our attention from the great concerns of our own country. But, what is it to us what they are doing in France? We are not now to be amused with heaps of trash about their Chambers and their Charter and their sham Elections and their burning the bones of Marie Antoinette and their masses and their processions and their miracles and the piety of the Duchess of Angouleme and their *vive le Roi* and *vive Henri Quatres* and the rest of their balderdash. We know, that foreign armies keep the Bourbons on the throne, and that the people are enslaved. No : we are not now to be thus amused. Ruin has been brought upon us ; and we seek a restoration to happiness, through the means of a *Reform of Parliament*.

In the pursuit of this object we should aim as much as possible at keeping it distinct from all other objects. Indeed, it includes every thing that justice and reason can demand. A great number of evils exist, but as all these evils would be cured by a reform, as far as they admit of a cure, it appears to me, gentlemen, that you should always, in your resolutions and petitions, confine yourselves to this great and single object. I pretend not to set up my judgment in opposition to that of men, who have discovered so much talent as has appeared in the proceedings in Southwark, at Bolton, at Nottingham, at Norwich, at Liverpool, at Middleton, at Sheffield, at Stockport, and at many other places ; but I am sure you will excuse me for taking the liberty to state that which I think would be most

likely to produce the desired effect. Were it my lot to draw up a petition upon such an occasion, I would endeavour, *first*, to describe the ruined state of the country ; *second*, I would ascribe this ruin to an overwhelming taxation aided by the sudden fluctuations of a paper money system ; *third*, I would ascribe this enormous taxation and this paper money system to the wars which have been carried on against the people of France and against the people of America, in both cases free Nations when we began our wars upon them ; *fourth*, I would state, that these wars would never have been undertaken, if the Parliament had been elected annually by all the tax-payers in the country, nor would the nation have been loaded with such enormous sums in the shape of sinecures, pensions, and grants ; *fifth*, I would conclude that, as the cause of all the evils of the country was the want of annual Parliaments chosen by the tax-payers at large, and as the constitution of England secured to our fore-fathers Parliaments annually chosen and provided that no man should be taxed without his own consent, the prayer of the people of England now is, that they may be restored to the rights enjoyed by their ancestors as the only means of preserving the tranquillity of the country and of uniting the hearts of the people in support of the throne and of all the other constitutional establishments of the kingdom.

I beg to repeat, that I do not presume to dictate to any one, and it would be very impertinent in me to do so, when the evidences of so much talent are constantly

before me; but, it appears to me to be of the greatest importance, that, as our object is the same, there should be an *uniformity* in the *substance* of our representations and endeavours. On this ground I was sorry to see a complaint about *tythes* introduced into the Southwark Petition. A very proper subject to be discussed; but I am for leaving that and all other minor subjects to be discussed and settled by a *reformed Parliament*. Let us have the reform first; let us obtain that, and all other good things will be given unto us. By pursuing the line of conduct, which I have here taken the liberty to sketch out, we keep clear of all differences of opinion as to matters of detail. The statement of grievances may be as copious as the writer pleases; he may exhaust all the eloquence that ever was given to man, and still fall short of doing justice to the subject; the standing army, the army kept up in France, the butchering of the Protestants in France while our army is there, the pensioning of foreigners, the putting of foreigners into offices of trust civil and military, the sinecures to men and women of quality, the amount of the civil list, the giving away of our money in hundreds of thousands of pounds to French emigrants, the laws to cramp the press; these and a hundred other things, might be brought into the statement of grievances; but I am clearly of opinion, that the *prayer* of every petition should be for such a reform as would restore the nation to the use of *annual Parliaments, chosen by all the tax-payers.*

Thus, Gentlemen, you will come united; you will come openly, fairly, and

consistently before the House at its meeting; and, I am confident, that if you do this, with spirit and in a constitutional manner, the great object will be attained *before the month of March.*

In my last, I have supposed the first reformed Parliament to be chosen in the month of October next; but there is no necessity for this delay. The Bill, if brought in in January, may very well go into effect in the month of March next, and the first Parliament might continue to be the Parliament until the following March, though their successors (where fresh Members were chosen) might be elected in the month of October next, and so on in every year. October is the most convenient month for the Elections, and the first of March appears to me to be the properest time for the Parliament Meeting. There being a space between the time of making the elections and the time of the meeting of Parliament would be attended with this advantage, that there would never be any portion of the year when a Parliament would not be in readiness, in case the King, upon any emergency, should think it necessary to call the Members together. Therefore, I see no reason why the reform should not be adopted, and actually go into effect, in the course of a few months. I cannot believe that the two Houses will not NOW see the necessity of this measure. The great Lord Chatham, said, even in his time, that, "if the Parliament did "not reform itself *from within*, it would "be reformed *from without*, with a *vengeance!*" If we, even in the midst of our ruin, were to make use of such an ex-

pression, we should not only be called Jacobins and Levellers, but *traitors* into the bargain. We wish for *no vengeance*; *no violent proceedings*; we will make use of *no menaces*; we will trust to truth, resolutely urged, and we will employ the only channel left in our hands, namely, *Petition and Remonstrance*. But, we will not stand with our arms folded; we will not hold our tongues, while we see our earnings passing away from our children; and, which is a still more grievous sight, while we see our poor neighbours, those whose sweat has administered to our comfort, actually perishing for want of food. We will not be silent under these circumstances, and if we were, we should merit to be scourged like dogs and to be the scorn of the world.

Upon one point, Gentlemen, I must take the liberty to be very earnest in my advice; and that is, upon the subject of *religious distinctions*. Let it be our creed, or at least, a prominent article in our creed, not to interrupt, to interfere with, much less to overset, any *ancient establishment* of our Country. The Church of England is of long standing. Our Country has been free and happy during a large portion of the time of the existence of this Church. Still this Church may stand in need of a reformation. Her Ministers, as a body, have certainly contributed very greatly in the promoting and continuing of the late wars, and they are manifestly too much dependant upon the Government. I myself am decidedly for removing every sort of *religious disability*. For the repeal of all religious tests, for the banishing for ever

of religion from politics. But I wish most earnestly, that all these matters, as well as the question about tythes, to be left to be settled by a Parliament freely chosen by all the tax-payers in the United Kingdom. Above all things, I wish to avoid every discussion about religious sects at the meetings for reform of Parliament. Our enemies will naturally endeavour to divide us by every means that their perfidy can suggest; and that man, who will refuse to co-operate with another man because he is of different religious opinions, is really an enemy of the country. Many of the *Dissenters* have been some of the most servile tools of the Ministers, during the late wars, and have lent their assistance to those measures, which have finally restored that bloody Inquisition which Napoleon had put down. But the *Dissenters* have not been guilty of greater faults in this way than the Church people themselves. And, therefore, what we have now to do is, to bury all these distinctions in oblivion, and cordially unite in the cause of our suffering country. Gentlemen, at the very moment when I am writing, intelligence reaches me, through the favourite channel of corruption, the *Courier Newspaper*, that the Ministers have, at last, received information, not from the Public Meetings, of which this hiring has made such bitter complaint, but from *Magistrates*, met in Quarter Sessions, that the taxes can no longer be paid!

The paragraph, containing this intelligence, under date of the 22d, instant, is in the following words: "Some further

" particulars respecting the disturbances " in Monmouthshire have reached us. " The Quarter Sessions met at the Town Hall, in Usk, on Monday se'nnight, " and the Magistrates agreed to represent " to the Chancellor of the Exchequer " the reduced state of the county by taxes " and rates, and the impossibility of pay- " ing those now becoming due; they resolv- " ed, respectfully but earnestly to request " some remission of taxation. These " measures were not, however, unani- " mously agreed to, though carried by a " large majority. Lord GRANVILLE " SOMERSET dissented from them."— You know who this Lord is; you know all about him and his family; and you will want nothing from me to enable you to account for his dissent.

Here, then, the government has received, in the most solemn manner, and from the most solemn source, the awful intelligence! "Read that, and then to supper "with what appetite you may!" Gentlemen, those amongst you, who have thought my writings worth your perusal, will remember, that, when the government had succeeded in laying its fangs upon the brave and generous NAPOLEON, and when the hirelings thought that the flame of liberty was for ever extinguished, those hirelings exclaimed with exultation, "The play is over; we may now go to "supper!" It was this same editor of the Courier, who indulged himself in this base and insolent language of triumph over what he deemed the final destruction of freedom and the endless joy of despots. "No!" exclaimed I, "you can- "not yet go to supper. You have not

" yet paid for the play. And before you " have paid for the play, you will find " that there is no money left for the " supper."

Gentlemen, am I chargeable with egotism, because I remind these hirelings of these my predictions? Shall I have endured, for so many years, the sneers, the revilings, the reproaches, the calumnies, and, which I more seriously feel, and which my children must feel, and which they burn to resent too, the persecutions of the emissaries of Corruption: shall I have endured all these for so many years; shall I have persevered, in spite of persecutions of all sorts, and of every degree, under which many a man would have first lost his senses and next lost his life; shall I now, when events have more than verified every one of my predictions, even the most gloomy of them, and those, which, even by the friends of freedom, were deemed chimerical; shall I now be called an egotist because I thus barely claim that which no one can deny is justice to myself? Very ready am I to allow that, for three or four years, out of sixteen, I was in *error*. Those errors I have always been ready to acknowledge; but to the utmost of my power, I have not only made full compensation for the harm done by those errors, but have further done to my country whatever degree of good has been within my reach. Very far also am I, and very far have I always been, from affecting to look upon myself as the *only* person, who has stood forward in the public cause. There are many men, whom I not only regard as having laboured

as since
I have a
withm o
still, I
tions an
my due
ing subj
And, I
no one a
amongst
reform,
tice, wh
possibly
injuries
the fath
the han
tion.

I beg
gression
me by
could n
be the
English
now ha
Does it
undenia
try's dis
me plea
the ful
No! fo
openly
selfish w
because
country
the har
The sta
telligenc
change i
sort of
pointed

as sincerely for the public good, but whom I have always declared to have laboured with *more ability* and *more effect*. But, still, I have a right, now that my predictions are fulfilled, to claim that which is my due, and to claim it too, without being subjected to the charge of egotism. And, I am quite satisfied, that, there is no one amongst you; that there is no one amongst the real friends of liberty and of reform, who will refuse to do me this justice, which is all the return, that I can possibly receive for the great and lasting injuries, which I, as an Englishman and as the father of a family, have received at the hands of the emissaries of Corruption.

I beg pardon, Gentlemen, for this digression; but the matter was forced upon me by the occasion in a manner which I could not resist. Gentlemen, what must be the situation of England, when an Englishman can read with pleasure, as *I now have*, the intelligence above quoted? Does it give me pleasure, because it is an undeniable, a damning, proof of my country's distress and misery? Does it give me pleasure, because it is such proof of the fulfilment of my own predictions? No! for then I should stand before you, openly avowing myself an unfeeling or a selfish wretch. But it gives me pleasure, because, though I see in it, a proof of my country's *present misery*, I also see in it the harbinger of her *lasting happiness*. The state of things, described in this intelligence, cannot long exist. A great change must speedily take place. What sort of change that ought to be I have pointed out; and if that change be now

adopted, there will be no confusion, no violation of the laws, no destruction of any constitutional establishment; but, order will be preserved, the evils we endure will be endured with fortitude and patient waiting, willing obedience to the laws will be seen throughout the country, happiness to the people will ensue, and their liberties and the rights and prerogatives of the throne will be established upon sure and permanent foundations.

Gentlemen, as I have a hundred times said, a people such as we are, who inhabit this United Kingdom; a people possessing such immense resources; a people so abounding in the means of all sorts of good and of all sorts of evil; a people so stout both in body and in mind, so industrious, so active, so habituated to discussion, so full of knowledge and of talent, so hardy, so brave, and amongst whom the feelings of friendship and of paternal and filial affection, and of confidence between man and man, are all carried to such excess; such a people never can sink quietly down into a state of obsequious slavery. It is impossible for us, as the East Indians are said to have done, to stand by and see thousands of our country people starve. It is useless to talk about law, about property, about force: the thing is impossible. Our very natures will not permit it to be.

But, *why need we be brought to the verge of any such extremity?* This is the question which every one asks; and I think, that, in the two foregoing Registers, I have clearly proved, that no such

necessity exists. I think I have clearly shown, that all our evils, great as they are, admit of an easy cure, and one that would not expose any part of the community to any one act of injustice; while all the means of securing the safety, and of upholding the power and the renown of our country would be greatly increased. I have not, as the tools of the Opposition faction do, dwelt upon the miseries of the country, merely for the sake of injuring the reputation of the men who are at present in the possession of power and emolument; I have done as you have done, with a sincere and anxious desire to see our country free and happy, stated the *evils*, but, at the same time, pointed out what I regard as an effectual *remedy*. If any man can show, that there is a better remedy, let him do it. If any man can show that there is any thing

dangerous to the peace and happiness of the people, or any thing hostile to the nobility or to the King, in the remedy which we call for, let him do it. But, if no man can show either of these, upon what ground will any man dare to stand forward and oppose himself to our remedy?

Gentlemen, in conclusion of this long address, I state it as my decided opinion, that, if you persevere in your present path, there is no man who will stand forward in opposition to the adoption of this remedy; and that two hundred Suns more will not go down on the misery and dis-honour of our beloved Country.

W.M. COBBETT.